

**SEATTLE DOWNTOWN PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES TASK
FORCE
TASK FORCE MEETING #2 SUMMARY
MARCH 11, 2005**

Task Force Members Present

Ken Bounds, Co-chair
Kate Joncas, Co-chair
Catherine Stanford, Co-chair
B.J. Brooks, Executive Staff
Eric Friedli, Subcommittee Chair
Anita Woo, Subcommittee Chair
Peggy Emerson
David Brewster

Jordan Royer
Ron Sher
Tina Bueche
Christopher Williams

Absent

Bruce Bentley
David Dillman

Parks & Rec. Staff

Dewey Potter
Victoria Schoenberg

Consultants

Bonnie Berk
Michael Regnier

Welcome and Introductions

Ken Bounds opened the meeting by welcoming all. Task Force members introduced themselves. Bonnie Berk summarized the meeting's agenda.

Quick Update on Recent Downtown Parks Activities

B.J. Brooks noted that Ken had recommended that the meeting summaries be approved prior to starting the discussion. The summaries after approval will be available on the Parks web site for everyone to view. The web address will be www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/DowntownTaskForce.htm. Kate Joncas moved to approve the summary, David Brewster seconded, and approval was unanimous pending a correction on page three paragraph one.

Catherine Stanford will replace David Dillman as Co-chair. Kate introduced Catherine and described her background. B.J. asked that everyone bring their notebooks and materials to each meeting although some extra handouts will be available. B.J. gave updates on Freeway Park, Occidental Park and Pier 62/63.

1. **Freeway Park** – Freeway Park has an active neighborhood group working along with Susanne Friedman (Project Manager for Parks and Recreation). Mayor Nickels has asked Ken to develop an action plan to activate Freeway Park and to work with the Freeway Park Association in doing so. There is overwhelming support from the Freeway Park Neighborhood Association and from representatives of landscape architecture and historic preservation groups. Parks is looking into a design to make the park more citizen-friendly.
2. **Occidental Park** – Parks is seeking approval from City Council to release funds for renovation. The Parks, Neighborhoods and Education Committee (PNE), which is chaired by City Councilmember Della, next meets on April 6.

3. **Pier 62/63** – The summer concert series has been moved to South Lake Union Park until all repair work is completed at Pier 62/63. There are funds allocated for this project, which is still in the planning phase. A Council briefing is scheduled for April 20, to give an update on the timeline and how the project will proceed.

Task Force Approval of Operating Principles

The Task Force Operating Principles refer to the Project Management Team; B.J. explained that this Team consists of the Co-Chairs, B.J., and the Consultants. Kate moved to approve the Principles, Catherine seconded, and motion approval was unanimous.

Briefing on Seattle Parks Funding History and Current Situation Assessment

B.J. distributed and described two handouts that convey Seattle Parks' historical and current funding. The first, a Downtown Park Matrix, summarizes the state of projects at each downtown park, listing the project name, project status, budget, funding source, and project description. (For the purpose of the Task Force, "downtown parks" means the 24 parks listed in the notebook and shown on the map included in the notebook.)

Ken noted that evaluation of a potential City Hall Park project will begin in April.

B.J. explained that South Lake Union Park will be added to the list of parks; it was originally omitted because Parks did not directly fund the projects there. Parks projects at Denny Triangle, the International District, Pioneer Square, First Hill and Capital Hill will also be added to the Matrix. The map of downtown parks will also be expanded to mirror the Center City Map (and thereby include South Lake Union, Denny, Cascade, Boren/Pike/Pine and Myrtle Edwards Parks).

Kate requested that the matrix be revised to indicate which projects are drawing on funding from the Pro Parks Levy or the County Conservation Futures Tax.

The second handout includes three charts tracking, from 1999 through 2006, Seattle Downtown Parks' operating budget and staffing levels; personnel and non-personnel costs; and capital improvement funds. B.J. noted that maintenance of the downtown parks is covered in part by the General Fund/Charter Revenue and the Pro Parks Levy.

In response to questions, Ken provided an overview of Seattle Parks' budget structure, including the roles of the General Fund, Pro Parks Levy, charter revenue, private gifts, and volunteer labor.

Operations Subcommittee Report

Christopher Williams reported that the first meeting of the Operations Subcommittee was held on March 9. All subsequent meetings will be held at the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID) Operations Meeting Room. The subcommittee will meet twice per month. The subcommittee asked for recommendations on cities to study/contact regarding best

management practices; the subcommittee plans to look at parks in ten cities, some with leading practices and programs and others that face challenges similar to Seattle's.

All members of the Task Force were encouraged to come to some of the subcommittee meetings to provide for input.

Christopher provided a detailed explanation of the Critical Response Plan, a protocol for coordinating Seattle Parks staff, Seattle Police and the Mayor's office in response to illegal behavior in parks.

Special Events Subcommittee Report

Anita Woo and Eric Friedli reported that they spent the last month developing the Special Events work plan and subcommittee list. The subcommittee will study best management practices from other cities on permitting, fees and activities. They asked for feedback on the list of prospective members; suggestions included an independent event producer, a representative of a music arts group, an Arts Commission representative, and a local historian.

The Special Events Subcommittee is also working to identify other cities to study, and Task Force members suggested that the two subcommittees work from one list. Suggestions included Portland, New York, Chicago, Boston, Charleston, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis, as well as European and Canadian cities. Task Force members also suggested that the Special Events Subcommittee look at promoting celebrations indigenous to Seattle.

Roundtable Discussion

It was the consensus of the group that the discussion was very informative. All agreed to keep all the meetings at the same time and same place, and a tour of the parks will be scheduled outside of the meetings. Both sub-committees reported that they have adequate staff support to proceed and complete all assignments.

Background Materials for the Task Force:

- List of the 24 downtown parks on a display board
- Critical response protocol 2005 on display board
- Pioneer Square Action Plan – handout
- Task Force Matrix – handout
- Task Force Roster – handout
- Downtown Parks Budget – handout
- Operations Subcommittee – handout
- Special Events Subcommittee – handout

Task Force members also expressed concern that future meetings move quickly to the "hard issues."

“Hard Issues” Identified

1. Use Policies and Permitting: Private Use of Public Park Spaces
 - Where should the boundaries be drawn? What is permitted and not permitted?
 - Design and physical issues, barriers
 - City ordinances
 - Assessment of implications and implementation issues
2. Programming Operations
3. Maintenance
 - How can privately provided help supplement the City’s responsibilities in ways that work with the City’s labor agreements?
4. Safety
5. Management
 - What is the best model and how do we implement it, transition to it?
 - What is the optimal structure?
6. Funding options to implement best policies for #1-5

Action Items, Next Steps and Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place from 8 to 10 a.m. on Friday, April 1, in the Boards & Commissions Conference Room on Level 2 at City Hall, 600 4th Avenue. Task Force members are requested to print and bring their own copies of the agenda, to be distributed electronically in advance.